

AÑO NUEVO STATE PARK



Final General Plan and Environmental Impact Report

Approved by the State Park and Recreation Commission on
October 31, 2008



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Cover photo: Gazos Beach as viewed from Franklin Point.



Resolution 27-2008
Adopted by the
CALIFORNIA STATE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
at its regular meeting in Pescadero, California
October 31, 2008

**Reclassification and Addition of
Año Nuevo State Natural Reserve
into the existing Año Nuevo State Park**

WHEREAS, the units of the State Park System are classified by the State Park and Recreation Commission into categories specified in California Public Resources Code Section 5019.50; and

WHEREAS, Año Nuevo State Natural Reserve was acquired in 1958 and originally designated as a state park, re-designated as a state reserve in 1963, and reclassified as a state natural reserve through legislation in 2004, with the purpose of preserving and protecting a major breeding habitat area of the northern elephant seal and making available for visitors' enjoyment a natural segment of the Central California coastline, with its sandy beaches, tide pools, rugged headlands, and coastal dunes; and

WHEREAS, the inland Cascade Ranch was acquired in 1985 and classified and named Año Nuevo State Park in 1999 to allow for consideration of recreation opportunities and park development, which would not have been allowed if it had been an addition to the State Natural Reserve; and

WHEREAS, Año Nuevo State Park currently consists of 2,900 acres on the inland side of State Highway 1, and the State Natural Reserve consists of 1,300 acres of marine terrace, sandy dunes and beaches, rocky coastline, and Año Nuevo Island seaward of Highway 1; and

WHEREAS, the combined size of these two existing park units is approximately 4,200 acres, and their natural and cultural resource values and outstanding scenic characteristics are comparable with other units of this size that are currently classified as state parks; and

WHEREAS, this Commission recognizes the uniqueness and distinction of Año Nuevo State Park and Año Nuevo State Natural Reserve for their abundance and diversity of significant natural, historic, prehistoric, and scenic resources as well as the outstanding recreational opportunities that are based on said values; and

WHEREAS, the Año Nuevo State Park General Plan proposes reclassifying the state natural reserve as a state park and consolidating this unit with the existing inland state park in order to provide more comprehensive and effective park management and protection for this diversity of natural and cultural resources and opportunities for diverse recreational use; and

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WHEREAS, the Año Nuevo State Park General Plan also proposes natural preserve and cultural preserve sub-classifications to provide additional resource protection for extraordinarily significant natural and cultural resource areas of this consolidated state park; and

WHEREAS, the Director of California State Parks has presented to this Commission for approval a proposal for expanding the existing Año Nuevo State Park by the addition and reclassification of Año Nuevo State Natural Reserve as state park, as recommended by and consistent with the purpose, vision, and goals of the General Plan for Año Nuevo State Park proposed for adoption by this Commission;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That this Commission has reviewed and considered the information and analysis contained in the proposed General Plan for this unit and testimony received during this public hearing as the basis for this change in unit classification from state natural reserve to state park; and be it further

RESOLVED: pursuant to Section 5019.50 of the Public Resources Code, and after proceedings in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, that the California State Park and Recreation Commission hereby approves the Department of Parks and Recreation's recommendation for the expansion of Año Nuevo State Park by the reclassification and addition of Año Nuevo State Natural Reserve to the existing Año Nuevo State Park.

Attest: This Resolution was duly adopted by the California State Park and Recreation Commission on October 31, 2008 at the Commission's duly-noticed public meeting at Pescadero, California.

By: ORIGINAL SIGNED BY Date: 10-31-08

Louis Nastro
Assistant to the Commission
For Ruth Coleman, Director
California State Parks
Secretary to the Commission



Resolution 28-2008
Adopted by the
CALIFORNIA STATE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
at its regular meeting in Pescadero, California
October 31, 2008

**General Plan and Environmental Impact Report
for Año Nuevo State Park**

WHEREAS, the Director of California State Parks has presented to this Commission for approval the proposed General Plan and Environmental Impact Report ("Plan") for Año Nuevo State Park ("Park"); and

WHEREAS, the Plan proposes to incorporate the state-owned properties west of State Highway 1 currently named and classified as Año Nuevo State Natural Reserve into the Año Nuevo State Park located inland of State Highway 1; and

WHEREAS, the Plan provides conceptual parameters and guidelines for the long-term management, development, operations, and future public use and enjoyment of the combined units as Año Nuevo State Park as well as the protection of its unique quality, resources, and diversity; and

WHEREAS, the Plan includes an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) as a part of a General Plan, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 5002.2 and the California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 15166 (CEQA Guidelines), providing discussion of the probable impacts of future development, establishing goals, policies and objectives, and addressing all the requirements of an EIR; and

WHEREAS, the Plan is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and functions as a "tiered EIR" pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21093, covering general goals and objectives of the Plan, and that the appropriate level of CEQA review will be conducted for each project relying on the Plan;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That this Commission has reviewed and considered the information and analysis in the Plan prior to approving the Plan, and this Commission finds and certifies that the Plan reflects the independent judgment and analysis of this Commission and has been completed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act; and be it

RESOLVED: In connection with its review of the General Plan prior to approval, this Commission independently finds that the environmental conclusions contained in the Environmental Analysis Section of the Plan are supported by facts therein and that each fact in support of the findings is true and is based on substantial evidence in the record and that mitigation measures or other changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Plan which will avoid or substantially lessen the potential impacts identified in the Plan; and be it

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RESOLVED: The location and custodian of the Plan and other materials which constitute the record of proceedings on which the Commission's decision is based is: State Park and Recreation Commission, P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento, California 94296-0001, Phone 916/653-0524, Facsimile 916/653-4458; and be it

RESOLVED: That the California State Park and Recreation Commission hereby approves the Department of Parks and Recreation's General Plan dated March 2008 and Final Environmental Impact Report prepared for Año Nuevo State Park; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED; That a Notice of Determination will be filed with the Office of Planning and Research within five days of this approval.

Attest: This Resolution was duly adopted by the California State Park and Recreation Commission on October 31, 2008 at the Commission's duly-noticed public meeting at Pescadero, California.

By: ORIGINAL SIGNED BY Date: 10-31-08

Louis Nastro
Assistant to the Commission
For Ruth Coleman, Director
California State Parks
Secretary to the Commission



Resolution 29-2008
Adopted by the
CALIFORNIA STATE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
at its regular meeting in Pescadero, California
October 31, 2008

Año Nuevo State Park Cultural Preserve Subclassification

WHEREAS, the units of the State Park System are classified by the State Park and Recreation Commission into categories specified in California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5019.50; and

WHEREAS, one of these classifications is "Cultural Preserve," which (per PRC 5019.74) consists of distinct non-marine areas of outstanding cultural interest established within the boundaries of a state park unit to preserve special features that represent significant places or events in the flow of human experience in California and where complete integrity of the cultural resources shall be sought; and

WHEREAS, the Año Nuevo State Park General Plan has proposed that a 225-acre Cultural Preserve be established in Quiroste Valley along the western edge of the Santa Cruz Mountains within Año Nuevo State Park, to protect the archaeological remains of a prehistoric Ohlone Native American village site, associated landscape, and resources; and with regard to this site's significance to the Portola Expedition of 1769 which camped there days prior to discovering San Francisco Bay; and

WHEREAS, the Department will consult and pursue partnerships with the local native California Indian representatives to establish resource management practices and interpretation of native California Indian history, lifeways, and the protection of significant cultural sites and features located in the Quiroste Valley; and

WHEREAS, the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation has proposed a Cultural Preserve be established within the inland portion of the Año Nuevo State Park, and recommends that it be named Quiroste Valley Cultural Preserve to provide for the recognition and protection of its outstanding cultural resources, ancient heritage, and cultural identity of this site;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED pursuant to Section 5019.74 of the Public Resources Code, and after proceedings in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, that the California State Park and Recreation Commission hereby classifies the above identified portion of Año Nuevo State Park as a Cultural Preserve with the name Quiroste Valley Cultural Preserve and as delineated in the Año Nuevo State Park General Plan.

Attest: This Resolution was duly adopted by the California State Park and Recreation Commission on October 31, 2008 at the Commission's duly-noticed public meeting at Pescadero, California.

By: _____ *ORIGINAL SIGNED BY* _____ Date: 10-31-08

Louis Nastro, Assistant to the Commission
For Ruth Coleman, Director, California State Parks
Secretary to the Commission



Resolution 30-2008
Adopted by the
CALIFORNIA STATE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
at its regular meeting in Pescadero, California
October 31, 2008

**Año Nuevo State Park
Natural Preserve Subclassification**

WHEREAS, the units of the State Park System are classified by the State Park and Recreation Commission into categories specified in Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5019.50; and

WHEREAS, one of these classifications is "Natural Preserve," which (per PRC 5019.71) consists of distinct non-marine areas of outstanding natural interest established within the boundaries of a state park unit to preserve features such as rare or endangered plant and animal species and their supporting ecosystems, or representative examples of plant and animal communities existing in California prior to the impact of civilization; and

WHEREAS, the Año Nuevo State Park General Plan has proposed that a 925-acre Natural Preserve be established west of State Highway 1 along the coastal length of Año Nuevo State Park, to provide for the recognition and protection of the outstanding and significant coastal resources of this area; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Natural Preserve replaces the currently designated Wildlife Protection Area and increases the protection and preservation of the most pristine native grasslands and dune ecosystems remaining on the central California coast which is habitat for several sensitive wildlife species such as the San Francisco garter snake, California brown pelican, and a major breeding colony of northern elephant seals around Año Nuevo Point and Año Nuevo Island, and the expansive ocean and coastline vistas; and

WHEREAS, the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation has proposed a 925-acre Natural Preserve be established within the coastal portion of the approximately 4,200 acre Año Nuevo State Park, and recommends that it be named Año Nuevo Coast Natural Preserve to provide for the recognition and protection of its outstanding coastal grasslands and dunes natural resources;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED pursuant to Section 5019.71 of the Public Resources Code, and after proceedings in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, that the California State Park and Recreation Commission hereby classifies the above identified portion of Año Nuevo State Park as a Natural Preserve with the name Año Nuevo Coast Natural Preserve and as delineated in the Año Nuevo State Park General Plan.

Attest: This Resolution was duly adopted by the California State Park and Recreation Commission on October 31, 2008 at the Commission's duly-noticed public meeting at Pescadero, California.

By: ORIGINAL SIGNED BY Date: 10-31-08

Louis Nastro, Assistant to the Commission
For Ruth Coleman, Director, California State Parks
Secretary to the Commission

AÑO NUEVO STATE PARK

(incorporates the former Año Nuevo State Natural Reserve)

Final General Plan and Environmental Impact Report

SCH #2003102088 (State Park)

SCH #2003102089 (State Natural Reserve)

Approved by the State Park and Recreation Commission on

October 31, 2008

Arnold Schwarzenegger

Governor

Mike Chrisman

Secretary for Resources

Ruth Coleman

Director of Parks and Recreation

State of California

The Resources Agency

Department of Parks and Recreation

P.O. Box 942896

Sacramento, California

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

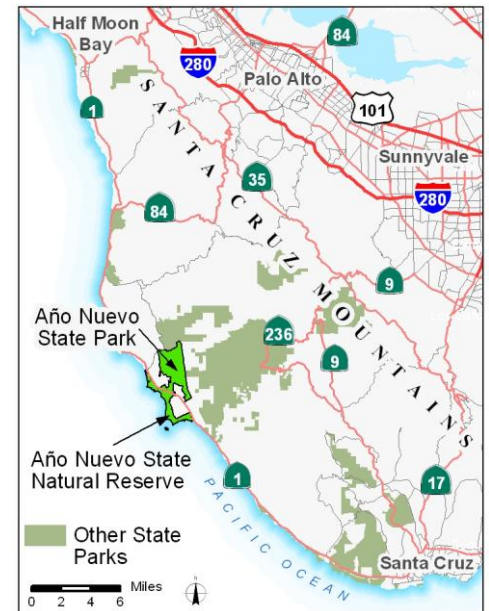
Photo on reverse: Franklin Point

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Park Description

Año Nuevo State Park (SP) is located in San Mateo County, approximately 25 miles south of Half Moon Bay and 25 miles north of Santa Cruz. The park is in the Santa Cruz Mountains region and is within 65 miles of the major metropolitan centers of San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland. State Highway 1 provides primary public access to the park.

This state park protects environmentally diverse segments of California's central coast. Año Nuevo SP's coast, formerly the Año Nuevo State Natural Reserve (SNR), on the coastal side of Highway 1, consists of approximately 1,300 acres of marine terrace, sandy dunes and beaches, rocky coastline, and Año Nuevo Island. The SNR was combined with Año Nuevo SP as a part of the State Park and Recreation Commission's October 31, 2008 approval of the General Plan and classification recommendations. The former SNR was partly managed as a Wildlife Protection Area, and is the site of a major breeding colony of the northern elephant seal and the focus of a popular interpretive program and tour. The inland portion of the State Park consists of approximately 2,900 acres on the east side of Highway 1 and public use or park facilities have not yet been established. The park is a part of the western slope of the Santa Cruz Mountains and contains uplands characterized by second-growth redwood and Douglas-fir forests, oaks, chaparral, and pine on rugged terrain, with mountain streams flowing through canyons on their way to the sea. The park also contains significant cultural resources that include historic ranch complexes, a coastal light station, and a Native California Indian village site. Recreation activities that currently occur along the coast include wildlife observation and hiking. Año Nuevo SP is among the forty-five most representative parks in the State Park System (SPS) that support the ecological values of the ten ecoregions in California.



Año Nuevo is an easy day-trip from the San Francisco, San Jose, and Oakland metropolitan areas.

Purpose for the General Plan

Although Año Nuevo SNR was included in the 1979 general plan for San Mateo coast park units, there has not been a comprehensive planning examination of both state reserve and state park lands. Such an examination would include evaluations of the incremental growth in the size of the park, diversity of resources, recreation needs and opportunities, operational efficiencies, and connectivity with surrounding

natural lands. The inland Cascade Ranch was acquired in 1985 and was classified and named Año Nuevo SP on January 14, 1999 in order to allow for consideration of recreation opportunities and park development, such as camping, which would not have been allowed if it was an addition to the existing SNR. Recognition of these and other issues prompted the preparation of this general plan, which provides a long-term management approach and a planning framework for the park units. One result of this planning process is the recommendation that Año Nuevo SP and SNR be combined into a single state park unit as presented by this general plan.

Regional Planning Context

This plan was developed by California State Parks as part of a regional planning effort, along with general plans for Big Basin Redwoods SP and Butano SP. These parks are not only in proximity to each other; they share natural, cultural, recreation, and visitor demographic characteristics, and face similar issues. The regional characteristics and common issues were researched at the beginning of the planning process and are used as a foundation for the three resulting park plans. The General Plan process also recognized each park's unique assets and needs separately. The three plans recognize the close relationship between California State Park units and other nearby public lands, and emphasize the potential for regional collaboration in park management, resource management, education and interpretation, and recreational use.

For each plan, park issues and opportunities were identified, and goals and guidelines developed as part of this regional planning approach. Planning zones were created for each park to assist in shaping appropriate management strategies and addressing projected levels of visitor use. Six planning zones were developed for Año Nuevo SP. The six Año Nuevo SP planning zones are described in the matrix at the end of this Executive Summary.

Key Issues and Opportunities

The following are the primary planning issues addressed by the general plan:

- Combining Año Nuevo SP and Año Nuevo SNR into a single State Park unit: The amount of land in state park ownership has grown in the Año Nuevo vicinity as acquisition opportunities have occurred over the 49 years since the original state reserve acquisition. The amount and diversity of natural, cultural, and scenic

The Año Nuevo, Big Basin, and Butano State Park general plans emphasize the close relationship and potential for collaboration between these park units and other nearby public lands.



resources on state park lands has expanded significantly beyond the elephant seals and coastal habitats of the original park acquisition. Although the elephant seal tours are among the State Park System's most popular natural resource attractions, visitors do not fully recognize the broad range of the park's resources, available lands, and connections to regional trail networks. Furthermore, the potential recreation and interpretation opportunities that would provide visitor awareness and appreciation of these resources have not been fully explored or realized. Park development, operations, and maintenance have also evolved in an incremental manner to respond to specific management circumstances and issues as the state park land ownership has grown. Combining the State Natural Reserve and the State Park would support expanded visitor experiences and orientation with a broader regional perspective toward visitor recreation opportunities and collaborative natural lands management. The coastal dune habitat and wildlife will be protected and managed in a designated Natural Preserve. The consolidation under one unit name would emphasize the historic links in ownership between the properties and avoid visitor confusion when trying to locate or contact the park. The consolidation would also improve park operations, resource management and protection, and future public access and visitor needs.

- **Recreation Demand and Visitor Opportunities:** The proximity of Año Nuevo SP to the nearby high density urban centers of Santa Clara Valley and the Bay Area can help serve a high regional demand for outdoor recreation. There is potential for enhancing and diversifying current recreational activities along the coast, as well as providing new recreation opportunities in the inland portions of Año Nuevo SP where formal park access and facilities have not yet been established. Links and partnerships between Año Nuevo and other surrounding regional natural areas will play an important role in providing even more diversified and accessible recreational activities as well as expanded recreational opportunities for a large nearby urban population.
- **Public Access and Circulation:** Existing access and circulation have increased as ownership and visitor use have evolved. Improving access to and within the consolidated park units and enhancing regional connections was a significant aspect of this planning effort. This general plan's proposal to combine the

The plan merges Año Nuevo SNR and SP into one state park unit, and provides increased protection for special areas by designating a cultural preserve and a natural preserve.

State Natural Reserve and State Park units provides an opportunity to improve and coordinate circulation and visitor safety, as well as assure integration with regional natural lands access and trail networks.

- **Regional Planning Approach:** Año Nuevo SP is surrounded by several State Park System units as well as other natural, recreational, and historic properties, such as Cascade Ranch Historic Farm, Cloverdale Coastal Ranches, Coast Dairies, and Mid-peninsula Regional Open Space District lands. The proximity of these properties and the similarity of natural, cultural, recreational, and interpretive resources provide opportunities to manage these lands in a coordinated and integrated way. This general plan emphasizes and supports the regional, recreational, natural, and cultural values of the parks and surrounding public lands. Furthermore, the general plan also encourages California State Parks to take a leadership role in regional collaborative efforts in these areas.
- **Preservation of Environmentally Sensitive Areas:** There are significant environmentally sensitive areas with distinctive landscapes that warrant special protection and management. In recognition and response to these special park features, this general plan establishes a Natural Preserve to protect coastal habitats and wildlife. The general plan also establishes a Cultural Preserve to protect a culturally significant valley in the inland portion of the park.

Key Proposals and Planning Concepts

The general plan merges the two existing park units into a single multi-faceted park. The general plan highlights the abundant diversity of park and recreation features and central California coastal visitor experiences beyond the popularity of the elephant seal tours at Año Nuevo Point. The general plan improves and expands protection of park resources; provides park improvements that enhance current and future coastal visitor recreational uses; establishes new visitor access and recreation opportunities to the park's inland areas; and provides for improved park operations and management. New Natural Preserve and Cultural Preserve sub-classification designations provide increased protection for special areas of the park. Key general plan concepts and proposals include:

Plan Concepts

- Preserve the wild, natural, and rural character of the Año Nuevo coast and the Santa Cruz Mountains backcountry.

- Integrate the planning, preservation, visitor opportunities, interpretation, park management, and operation of Año Nuevo SNR and Año Nuevo SP into one unified and multi-faceted park unit.
- Collaborate with area partners and have California State Parks take a leadership role on Santa Cruz Mountains-San Mateo Coast regional efforts for natural lands management, sensitive resource protection and habitat linkages, recreation, trail networks, and education and interpretation. Explore acquisitions from willing sellers for these same purposes as land becomes available.
- In response to California's demographic trends, where possible provide group day use picnic and camping facilities, indoor overnight accommodations such as cabins or yurts, RV campsites, and ADA-compliant recreational facilities.
- Continue to locate the majority of park improvements and new development at or near the existing ranch complexes and along or near the State Highway 1 corridor which is the primary access route to the park. Park improvements and programs should be compatible with the historic character of the ranch complexes. Reduce park development as the distance from the ranch complexes and highway increases.
- Incorporate sustainable design principles into the design, development, operations, and maintenance of park facilities and programs.
- Improve park circulation and access for vehicles, pedestrians, equestrians, and bicycles. Work with local transit agencies to expand park access via mass-transit and multi-modal transportation systems.
- Minimize sensitive resource impacts while expanding recreation opportunities.

Plan Proposals

- Reclassify Año Nuevo SNR and Año Nuevo SP and combine them into a single State Park unit.
- Replace the existing Wildlife Protection Area (434 acres). Designate a Natural Preserve sub-classification (800 acres) and expand protection of coastal wildlife, habitats, and park resources.
- Establish a Cultural Preserve (225 acres) in the Quiroste Valley to preserve and protect the unique cultural resources, landscape setting, and Native California Indian heritage.

Important plan concepts include preserving the wild, natural and rural character of the area, and continuing to locate the majority of park improvements and new development near Highway 1 or near the existing ranch complexes.



Proposals include allowing for appropriate adaptive use of the historic buildings while preserving their character, continued use of the Dickerman-Steele Ranch complex as the primary visitor services area, and development of inland day-use parking and trailhead facilities at Lake Elizabeth.

- Preserve and maintain the historic character of the Dickerman-Steele Ranch and Cascade Ranch complexes. Allow for appropriate adaptive uses.
- Continue the Dickerman-Steele Ranch complex as the park's primary visitor orientation, interpretation, and activity center.
- Improve and expand park visitor facilities, experiences, access, and trails.
- Develop day use parking and trailhead facilities at Lake Elizabeth to establish visitor access into the inland areas and the Santa Cruz Mountains region.
- Provide new trailhead access and potential day uses facilities and/or an operations maintenance facility south of the Cascade Ranch.
- Connect State Park lands to regional trail systems and destinations, including the California Coastal Trail.
- Continue to survey for special status plant and animal species, and implement appropriate management techniques to protect those species.
- Provide greater cultural resource protection and interpretation at Quiroste Valley.
- Improve park services and operations efficiency through interagency and intra-district cooperation and sharing of personnel and resources. This may include operations facilities in the vicinity of Cascade Ranch.
- Provide trailside camping and alternative overnight visitor opportunities such as enroute camping and indoor overnight accommodations such as yurts in the inland areas of the park where appropriate.
- Continue wildlife research activities at Año Nuevo Island.
- Work with federal, state, and local agencies to provide effective and efficient regional natural resource management including DFG's Wildlife Action Plan's recommendations for the Central Coast Region and the Marine Region.

A more detailed list of Plan Proposals is in described in Section 5.3.

Management Plans

Some of the goals and guidelines comprising the Park Plan (Chapter 4) suggest the preparation of specific management plans and more detailed site investigations. These include the following:

- Vegetation Management Statement

- Wildfire Management Plan
- Prescribe Fire Plan
- Watershed Management Plan
- Roads and Trails Management Plan
- Scope of Collections Statement
- Interpretive Plans and Exhibit Plans
- Historic Structures Reports and Cultural Landscape Reports
- Conservation Plan and treatment guidelines for the Steele Family/Chinese Workers' Cemetery

Tiered CEQA Environmental Analysis

This General Plan/Final EIR serves as a first-tier Environmental Impact Report, as defined in Section 15166 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. The environmental analysis is programmatic in scope and serves as a first tier EIR. Tiering is a process where a lead agency prepares a series of environmental documents, progressing from general concerns to more site-specific evaluations with the preparation of each new document (CEQA Guidelines Section 15152). The Environmental Analysis does not contain project-specific analysis for the facilities that are considered in the general plan but analyzes broad environmental matters and is a reference for future environmental documents that will provide more detailed information and analysis for site specific developments and projects.

This General Plan/Final EIR provides discussion of the probable impacts of future development and established goals, policies, and objectives to implementing such development in a manner which will avoid or minimize environmental impacts. This approach is consistent with a tiered approach to EIRs.

The general plan also includes guidelines that govern future project-level environmental review of site-specific projects to avoid or minimize potential adverse site-specific effects to resources during construction or operation of the facilities and improvements. Specific projects would also undergo subsequent CEQA review as appropriate. Because the general plan contains goals and guidelines that are designed to avoid or minimize potential adverse environmental effects, no significant program-level impacts were identified.



Table ES-1 - AÑO NUEVO STATE PARK-PLANNING ZONE MATRIX

	Entrance and Interpretive Center Zone	Wildlife and Dune Protection Zone	Cascade Ranch Zone	Lake Elizabeth Zone	Quiroste Valley Zone	Backcountry Zone
Area Description	This zone is characterized by a flat coastal terrace, a ravine, and bluffs. Unique resources include historic structures and sensitive plant and animal species. Located in the southern coastal portion of the park, it serves as the primary park entrance and parking area for visitor access, orientation & interpretation at the Dickerman-Steele Ranch complex that includes elephant seal tours and interpretive programs at the Visitor Center.	This zone includes the coastal area west of the highway, characterized by a coastal bluff, sand dunes, a rocky shoreline, pocket beaches, a broad sandy beach, and also includes the relatively flat and rocky Año Nuevo Island. Much of this coastal zone is currently designated as a Wildlife Protection Area.	This zone encompasses the Cascade Ranch complex located east of State Highway 1 in the southern portion of Año Nuevo SP. The ranch is divided into two ownerships, State Parks and the private-owned Cascade Ranch Historic Farm properties. The ranch forms a part of California State Historic Landmark #906 and appears eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.	This zone is located adjacent to State Highway 1 between Cascade Ranch to the south and Whitehouse Road to the north. The Lake Elizabeth Zone is characterized by annual grasslands on flat terrain and gentle coastal slopes and riparian scrub vegetation surrounding Lake Elizabeth, an agricultural irrigation reservoir, and its associated drainage.	The Quiroste Valley is a secluded valley of annual grasslands and coyote brush surrounded by forested hills located in the western foothills of the park along the north side of Whitehouse Road.	The Backcountry consists of the more remote uplands areas of the park, characterized by forested mountains, rolling hills covered with grass and chaparral, and riparian canyons with lush undergrowth and large trees. Its northern boundary consists of a linear corridor along Gazos Creek adjacent to Butano SP. The Backcountry is also contiguous to Big Basin Redwoods SP on the east.

Año Nuevo State Park
Final General Plan and EIR

	Entrance and Interpretive Center Zone	Wildlife and Dune Protection Zone	Cascade Ranch Zone	Lake Elizabeth Zone	Quiroste Valley Zone	Backcountry Zone
Resource Character and Management (Carrying Capacity Objective)	Due to its location with direct access from Hwy. 1, facilities in this zone will continue to serve as the main park entrance and provide visitor orientation, education, and interpretation for the park. It will be managed to provide a variety of recreation and interpretive opportunities and services, while ensuring the protection and preservation of significant historic resources within the Dickerman-Steele Ranch complex.	The Wildlife and Dune Protection Zone will be managed primarily to protect and preserve the unique terrestrial and marine wildlife and natural and cultural resources while providing visitor access, education, and interpretation. Most of this coastal zone will be designated as a Natural Preserve, except for an appropriate buffer zone along the highway and adjacent coastal farmlands.	The Cascade Ranch contains historic ranch structures including residences, outbuildings, barn, and a cemetery. The Cascade Ranch Zone, in cooperation with Cascade Ranch Historic Farm, will be managed primarily for historic and cultural landscape values and interpretive potential. The site will also offer trailhead parking for access into the Backcountry, staff housing, and compatible maintenance functions. Modern improvements should be compatible with historic character and treatment guidelines.	The Lake Elizabeth Zone will be managed primarily for visitor access, recreational use, and natural resource protection.	The Quiroste Valley will be managed as an area of unique cultural resources, with provisions for public access, cultural resource preservation and interpretation, special events, and appropriate visitor use. Most of this inland valley will be designated as a Cultural Preserve. Planning zone areas outside the Cultural Preserve will be a natural lands buffer area.	The Backcountry will be managed primarily to preserve its natural, cultural, and scenic resources and sense of solitude, and provide access and resource connectivity with adjacent Big Basin and Butano State Parks.

	Entrance and Interpretive Center Zone	Wildlife and Dune Protection Zone	Cascade Ranch Zone	Lake Elizabeth Zone	Quiroste Valley Zone	Backcountry Zone
Visitor Experiences (Carrying Capacity Objective)	<p>Visitors experience distinctive natural and cultural resources through nature hikes, exhibits, lectures, and videos at the visitor center-historic ranch complex. Trails will provide visitors of all ability levels access to the wildlife, landscapes, and historic features of the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High to medium level of use ▪ Frequent contact with others 	<p>Hikers and organized tour groups can observe the elephant seal rookery and explore the wild coastline and dune habitats. An ADA accessible boardwalk and viewing deck are provided. Seasonal use periods contribute to the remote character of the wild coast.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low to high use is controlled by organized tours ▪ Low to moderate frequency of contact with others 	<p>Visitors will access and enjoy the remaining features of the historically important Cascade Ranch and understand the rancher's way of life in the traditional agriculture and dairy industries along the coast.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low to moderate use ▪ Low to moderate frequency of contact with others 	<p>Visitors will experience spectacular views of forested mountains and rolling brush- and grass-covered foothills to the east and the coast to the west. Visitors will find relaxation, wildlife viewing, trail access, and enroute camping opportunities at this location.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Medium level of use ▪ Moderate frequency of contact with others 	<p>Visitors will be able to experience and learn about native California Indian culture and history through living history programs, workshops, and special events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low level to moderate use ▪ Low to moderate frequency of contact with others ▪ High frequency of contact and use during special events 	<p>Hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians can explore the park on an extensive trail system and connect with the region's network of multi-use trails to venture into the surrounding Santa Cruz Mountains and coastal areas. A low level of use contributes to the remote character of the Backcountry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low level of use ▪ Infrequent contact with others

Año Nuevo State Park
Final General Plan and EIR

	Entrance and Interpretive Center Zone	Wildlife and Dune Protection Zone	Cascade Ranch Zone	Lake Elizabeth Zone	Quiroste Valley Zone	Backcountry Zone
Visitor Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Orientation, education, and interpretation of the park ▪ Contact with park staff and volunteers ▪ Group staging for guided hiking tours of the elephant seal rookery ▪ Trailheads and trails ▪ Picnicking ▪ No overnight use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elephant seal tours and wildlife viewing ▪ Hiking on designated trails ▪ Scientific research ▪ Vehicles are directed to authorized roads and trails outside the Natural Preserve ▪ No fishing at Gazos Creek and Beach (in accordance with Marine Life Protection Act) ▪ No overnight use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interpretive programs and special events focus on the historic ranch setting and cultural history ▪ Picnicking ▪ Group day use activities ▪ Hiking, biking, and equestrian trail access to Cascade Falls and Lake Elizabeth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trailhead staging ▪ Hiking, biking, and equestrian trail access to Santa Cruz Mountains regional trails and Cascade Ranch ▪ Enroute camping ▪ No lake recreation allowed (in accordance with water rights agreements) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interpretive programs and special events focused on native California Indian culture and village life ▪ Hiking, biking, and equestrian trail access ▪ Primitive trailside camping or alternative overnight accommodations ▪ No motorized equipment or vehicles unless required for health and safety, park maintenance, or special events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hiking, biking, and equestrian trail access to Santa Cruz Mountains regional trails ▪ Primitive trailside camping

	Entrance and Interpretive Center Zone	Wildlife and Dune Protection Zone	Cascade Ranch Zone	Lake Elizabeth Zone	Quiroste Valley Zone	Backcountry Zone
Range of Appropriate Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rehabilitated historic structures adapted for appropriate uses ▪ Visitor center ▪ Restrooms ▪ Vehicular parking ▪ Elephant seal tour staging areas ▪ Orientation and interpretive elements ▪ Trailheads and trails ▪ Picnic sites ▪ Scenic view points ▪ Park offices ▪ Staff housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trailheads, trails and boardwalks ▪ Scenic view points ▪ Interpretive elements ▪ Facilities outside of Preserve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vehicular parking - Restrooms - School group staging area - Staff housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rehabilitated historic structures adapted for appropriate uses ▪ Staff housing ▪ Restrooms ▪ Vehicular parking ▪ Trailheads and trails ▪ Interpretive elements ▪ Picnic sites ▪ Group day-use facilities ▪ Park operations and maintenance facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vehicular parking (capable of accommodating cars, camper vans, recreation vehicles, and horse trailers) ▪ Restrooms ▪ Orientation and interpretive elements ▪ Trailheads and trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reconstructed non-permanent Ohlone village structures and outdoor activity areas ▪ Restrooms ▪ Scenic view points ▪ Interpretive elements outside of Cultural Preserve ▪ Vehicular parking ▪ Trailhead and trails ▪ Permitted trail camps or non-permanent alternative overnight accommodations (with appropriate support facilities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trailheads and trails ▪ Vehicular parking ▪ Restrooms ▪ Scenic view points ▪ Interpretive elements ▪ Picnic sites ▪ Trail camps or horse/bicycle trail camps ▪ Orientation/interpretive and visitor-serving facilities in conjunction with POST



AÑO NUEVO STATE PARK - PLANNING ZONE MATRIX						
	Entrance and Interpretive Center Zone	Wildlife and Dune Protection Zone	Cascade Ranch Zone	Lake Elizabeth Zone	Quiroste Valley Zone	Backcountry Zone
Area Description	<p>This zone is characterized by a flat coastal terrace, a ravine, and bluffs. Unique resources include historic structures and sensitive plant and animal species. Located in the southern coastal portion of the park, it serves as the primary park entrance and parking area for visitor access, orientation & interpretation at the Dickerman-Steele Ranch complex that includes elephant seal tours and interpretive programs at the Visitor Center.</p>	<p>This zone includes the coastal area west of the highway, characterized by a coastal bluff, sand dunes, a rocky shoreline, pocket beaches, a broad sandy beach, and also includes the relatively flat and rocky Año Nuevo Island. Much of this coastal zone is currently designated as a Wildlife Protection Area.</p>	<p>This zone encompasses the Cascade Ranch complex located east of State Highway 1 in the southern portion of Año Nuevo SP. The ranch is divided into two ownerships, State Parks and the private-owned Cascade Ranch Historic Farm properties. The ranch forms a part of California State Historic Landmark #906 and appears eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.</p>	<p>This zone is located adjacent to State Highway 1 between Cascade Ranch to the south and Whitehouse Road to the north. The Lake Elizabeth Zone is characterized by annual grasslands on flat terrain and gentle coastal slopes and riparian scrub vegetation surrounding Lake Elizabeth, an agricultural irrigation reservoir, and its associated drainage.</p>	<p>The Quiroste Valley is a secluded valley of annual grasslands and coyote brush surrounded by forested hills located in the western foothills of the park along the north side of Whitehouse Road.</p>	<p>The Backcountry consists of the more remote uplands areas of the park, characterized by forested mountains, rolling hills covered with grass and chaparral, and riparian canyons with lush undergrowth and large trees. Its northern boundary consists of a linear corridor along Gazos Creek adjacent to Butano SP. The Backcountry is also contiguous to Big Basin Redwoods SP on the east.</p>
Resource Character and Management (Carrying Capacity Objective)	<p>Due to its location with direct access from Hwy. 1, facilities in this zone will continue to serve as the main park entrance and provide visitor orientation, education, and interpretation for the park. It will be managed to provide a variety of recreation and interpretive opportunities and services, while ensuring the protection and preservation of significant historic resources within the Dickerman-Steele Ranch complex.</p>	<p>The Wildlife and Dune Protection Zone will be managed primarily to protect and preserve the unique terrestrial and marine wildlife and natural and cultural resources while providing visitor access, education, and interpretation. Most of this coastal zone will be designated as a Natural Preserve, except for an appropriate buffer zone along the highway and adjacent coastal farmlands.</p>	<p>The Cascade Ranch contains historic ranch structures including residences, outbuildings, barn, and a cemetery. The Cascade Ranch Zone, in cooperation with Cascade Ranch Historic Farm, will be managed primarily for historic and cultural landscape values and interpretive potential. The site will also offer trailhead parking for access into the Backcountry, staff housing, and compatible maintenance functions. Modern improvements should be compatible with historic character and treatment guidelines.</p>	<p>The Lake Elizabeth Zone will be managed primarily for visitor access, recreational use, and natural resource protection.</p>	<p>The Quiroste Valley will be managed as an area of unique cultural resources, with provisions for public access, cultural resource preservation and interpretation, special events, and appropriate visitor use. Most of this inland valley will be designated as a Cultural Preserve. Planning zone areas outside the Cultural Preserve will be a natural lands buffer area.</p>	<p>The Backcountry will be managed primarily to preserve its natural, cultural, and scenic resources and sense of solitude, and provide access and resource connectivity with adjacent Big Basin and Butano State Parks.</p>

AÑO NUEVO STATE PARK - PLANNING ZONE MATRIX						
	Entrance and Interpretive Center Zone	Wildlife and Dune Protection Zone	Cascade Ranch Zone	Lake Elizabeth Zone	Quiroste Valley Zone	Backcountry Zone
Visitor Experiences (Carrying Capacity Objective)	<p>Visitors experience distinctive natural and cultural resources through nature hikes, exhibits, lectures, and videos at the visitor center-historic ranch complex. Trails will provide visitors of all ability levels access to the wildlife, landscapes, and historic features of the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ High to medium level of use▪ Frequent contact with others	<p>Hikers and organized tour groups can observe the elephant seal rookery and explore the wild coastline and dune habitats. An ADA accessible boardwalk and viewing deck are provided. Seasonal use periods contribute to the remote character of the wild coast.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Low to high use is controlled by organized tours▪ Low to moderate frequency of contact with others	<p>Visitors will access and enjoy the remaining features of the historically important Cascade Ranch and understand the rancher’s way of life in the traditional agriculture and dairy industries along the coast.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Low to moderate use▪ Low to moderate frequency of contact with others	<p>Visitors will experience spectacular views of forested mountains and rolling brush- and grass-covered foothills to the east and the coast to the west. Visitors will find relaxation, wildlife viewing, trail access, and enroute camping opportunities at this location.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Medium level of use▪ Moderate frequency of contact with others	<p>Visitors will be able to experience and learn about native California Indian culture and history through living history programs, workshops, and special events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Low level to moderate use▪ Low to moderate frequency of contact with others▪ High frequency of contact and use during special events	<p>Hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians can explore the park on an extensive trail system and connect with the region’s network of multi-use trails to venture into the surrounding Santa Cruz Mountains and coastal areas. A low level of use contributes to the remote character of the Backcountry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Low level of use▪ Infrequent contact with others
Visitor Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Orientation, education, and interpretation of the park▪ Contact with park staff and volunteers▪ Group staging for guided hiking tours of the elephant seal rookery▪ Trailheads and trails▪ Picnicking▪ No overnight use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Elephant seal tours and wildlife viewing▪ Hiking on designated trails▪ Scientific research▪ Vehicles are directed to authorized roads and trails outside the Natural Preserve▪ No fishing at Gazos Creek and Beach (in accordance with Marine Life Protection Act)▪ No overnight use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Interpretive programs and special events focus on the historic ranch setting and cultural history▪ Picnicking▪ Group day use activities▪ Hiking, biking, and equestrian trail access to Cascade Falls and Lake Elizabeth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Trailhead staging▪ Hiking, biking, and equestrian trail access to Santa Cruz Mountains regional trails and Cascade Ranch▪ Enroute camping▪ No lake recreation allowed (in accordance with water rights agreements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Interpretive programs and special events focused on native California Indian culture and village life▪ Hiking, biking, and equestrian trail access▪ Primitive trailside camping or alternative overnight accommodations▪ No motorized equipment or vehicles unless required for health and safety, park maintenance, or special events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Hiking, biking, and equestrian trail access to Santa Cruz Mountains regional trails▪ Primitive trailside camping
Range of Appropriate Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Rehabilitated historic structures adapted for appropriate uses▪ Visitor center▪ Restrooms▪ Vehicular parking▪ Elephant seal tour staging areas▪ Orientation and interpretive elements▪ Trailheads and trails▪ Picnic sites▪ Scenic view points▪ Park offices▪ Staff housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Trailheads, trails and boardwalks▪ Scenic view points▪ Interpretive elements▪ Facilities outside of Preserve:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Vehicular parking- Restrooms- School group staging area- Staff housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Rehabilitated historic structures adapted for appropriate uses▪ Staff housing▪ Restrooms▪ Vehicular parking▪ Trailheads and trails▪ Interpretive elements▪ Picnic sites▪ Group day-use facilities▪ Park operations and maintenance facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Vehicular parking (capable of accommodating cars, camper vans, recreation vehicles, and horse trailers)▪ Restrooms▪ Orientation and interpretive elements▪ Trailheads and trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Reconstructed non-permanent Ohlone village structures and outdoor activity areas▪ Restrooms▪ Scenic view points▪ Interpretive elements outside of Cultural Preserve▪ Vehicular parking▪ Trailhead and trails▪ Permitted trail camps or non-permanent alternative overnight accommodations (with appropriate support facilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Trailheads and trails▪ Vehicular parking▪ Restrooms▪ Scenic view points▪ Interpretive elements▪ Picnic sites▪ Trail camps or horse/bicycle trail camps▪ Orientation/interpretive and visitor-serving facilities in conjunction with POST

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1 INTRODUCTION

Photo on reverse: Tour group viewing elephant seals at Año Nuevo Point

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE PARK

1.1 LOCATION AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

This document presents information on Año Nuevo State Park (SP) and the former Año Nuevo State Natural Reserve (SNR) which has been combined with the State Park into a single state park unit as a result of the California State Park and Recreation Commission approval of this General Plan. Also, as a result of Commission approval of the General Plan, most of the coastal area of the park unit is now classified as a Natural Preserve and a secluded inland valley is classified as a Cultural Preserve (see **Figure 15**: Proposed Preserves).

Año Nuevo SP is located in San Mateo County, approximately 25 miles south of Half Moon Bay and 25 miles north of Santa Cruz. The park is in the Santa Cruz Mountains region and is within 65 miles of the major metropolitan centers of San Jose, San Francisco and Oakland. The Santa Cruz Mountains region has many public recreation and natural lands owned by entities such as California State Parks, Santa Cruz County, San Mateo County, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, the California Department of Fish and Game, the Santa Cruz Water Department, the University of California, the Sempervirens Fund, and the Peninsula Open Space Trust. The region also contains private recreation providers, small towns, rural housing, small businesses, agriculture, and timber companies. (See **Figure 1**).

1.2 SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Año Nuevo SP preserves environmentally diverse segments of the central California coast. The coastal portion of Año Nuevo SP consists of approximately 1,313 acres of gently sloping marine terrace adjacent to sandy dunes, beaches, and a rocky coastline. Willows grow along several creeks as they come out of the mountains to the east and wind their way across the park to the ocean, including Año Nuevo Creek on the southern boundary and Gazos Creek on the northern coastal boundary. The Año Nuevo coast is the site of a major mainland breeding colony of the northern elephant seal. The park's elephant seal interpretive program attracts increasing interest every winter. Elephant seals, sea lions, and other



Dune vegetation at
Franklin Point

marine mammals come ashore to rest, mate, and give birth on the sand dunes, beaches and offshore islands. It is a unique and unforgettable natural spectacle that thousands of people come to witness each year. A trail to the coast's primary seal area extends from the visitor contact area near Highway 1 to beaches along the Reserve's western-most point, part of a Wildlife Protection Area along the coastal strand. The park's entrance area has public parking and several historic dairy and ranch buildings, some of which have been adapted for modern use. The park's visitor center is housed in the historic Dickerman Barn.

Along the coastal north end of Año Nuevo SP are several parking areas west of Highway 1, with trailheads providing coastal access across the marine terrace to the cliffs above the rocky shore in the southern part of the park, and the sandy beaches north of Franklin Point. An old burial site at Franklin Point holds the remains of mid-1800s shipwreck victims. On Año Nuevo Island, several structures built in the early 1900s to support a lighthouse facility bear witness to efforts to warn passing ships of the presence of dangerous rocks. The lighthouse itself was decommissioned in 1948 and replaced by an automatic buoy, but the support buildings remain. The island is used by marine mammals and birds for breeding. Its wildlife and ecology are being studied by various research institutions. The island is closed to the public.



Año Nuevo SP, Lake Elizabeth in foreground

The inland portion of Año Nuevo SP consists of approximately 2,896 acres of land not yet developed for public use. The park's uplands are characterized by second-growth redwood and Douglas-fir forest, oaks, chaparral, and pine on rugged terrain, with mountain streams flowing through canyons on their way to the sea. Lower elevation annual grasslands and coyote brush cover the more gentle terrain to the west, with arroyo willow riparian forest along the creeks, and freshwater marshes and ponds in the lowlands. A small reservoir along Whitehouse Road and a larger reservoir adjacent to the highway, known as Lake Elizabeth, provide water for off-site agricultural crops. The park's four perennial streams support steelhead trout and coho salmon, and its wetlands are habitat for the rare San Francisco garter snake and California red-legged frog. Cultural resources include the remnants of a prehistoric native California Indian village site and a number of 19th century dairy ranch structures. The park protects important regional ecological corridors in conjunction with adjacent and nearby public lands.

The majority of streams and creeks in the park's uplands drain into Gazos, Whitehouse, and Cascade creeks. A section of Gazos Creek forms the boundary between Butano SP and

Año Nuevo SP, flowing west out of the uplands and eventually entering the ocean near the northern park boundary. Whitehouse Creek traverses from east to west through the center of the park as it flows to the ocean. Cascade Creek flows to the ocean across the southern part of the park.

A network of unpaved roads and trails traverses inland from Highway 1 to its boundaries shared with Butano SP on the north and Big Basin Redwoods SP on the east. Old Womans Creek Road, which bisects the northern area of the park, and Whitehouse Road allow access by easements for private property owners east of the park. Paved Gazos Creek Road is just north of the park's northern boundary. The park's internal road and trail system offers quiet solitude on open hillsides with spectacular views of the coast, evergreen forest, and canyon slopes; and provides trail access to the adjacent state parks. No formal inland park access or facilities have been established yet. Informal inland hiking, biking and equestrian trail use occurs, however, coming in from adjacent Butano SP, Big Basin Redwoods SP, and adjacent regional natural areas.

1.3 PURPOSE ACQUIRED

Año Nuevo SNR was created in 1958 in part to preserve and protect a potentially major breeding ground of the northern elephant seal and to support recovery of their decimated populations. Elephant seals were hunted close to the point of extinction in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Subsequent to government protection of the species, the first elephant seal sighting on Año Nuevo Island was in 1955. The first pup was born on the island in 1961. Today, more than 20,000 births have been recorded in the Reserve and the number continues to grow annually. Protection of the seals' coastal habitat and the growth of the park's interpretive programs have allowed many visitors the recreational and educational benefits of observing these animals in their natural environment, further encouraging preservation of coastal ecosystems.

Over time, land has been acquired for state parks in the Santa Cruz Mountains region to help protect California's diminishing native redwood and coastal habitats and to provide recreational opportunities for the state's growing population. Año Nuevo SP was acquired to preserve and protect substantial acreage on the western slope of the Santa Cruz Mountains inland from Año Nuevo Point. Much of this land was previously part of a large dairy known as the

Cascade Ranch. Several private efforts to acquire and develop the property in the 1970s and early 1980s spurred California State Parks to acquire the largest portion of the property in 1985, with assistance from private non-profit organizations, private individuals, and the California state legislature. Specific reference was made at the time to the potential of the property to respond to the high demand for camping facilities on the San Mateo coast.

An approximately 400-acre parcel containing historic Cascade Ranch buildings was acquired in 1986 to preserve the ranch buildings and interpret the history of this early dairy and agricultural operation to the public.

1.4 SENSE OF PLACE

Each of California's state parks inspire a unique sense of place. Most visitors begin to sense the essence of a park when they first enter the park environment – the feeling of being in a special place set aside in perpetuity to preserve and protect a set of extraordinary values. This awareness of a certain place often leads to a sense of belonging and reconnection. State parks offer visitors opportunities to reconnect to the natural world and our cultural heritage, providing visitors with lasting impressions and memorable experiences.

Various areas of Año Nuevo SP have differences in character and provide different senses of place. These experiences are found respectively in the entrance area off Highway 1 and the along the western coastal strand. In addition to variations in site characteristics, there are frequent changes in weather conditions, and fog often adds a mystique and dynamic spectacle to many park areas. Views of the ocean are common throughout all areas of the park.

The coastal portion inspires visitors with spectacular vistas of the ocean and sky and the sight of large populations of marine mammals on the sandy beaches. Visitors can take guided tours to see elephant seals and other marine animals in breeding season and take away powerful impressions of the native coastal environment and the flow of life. A tour of the park's visitor center complex contributes to a sense of the complexity and interconnectedness of the natural resources and cultural history. Trails take the visitor out into the brisk salty air to head in the direction of the sand dunes and seals. Grasses and willows stabilize the sand and allow other native plants to flourish. The salty marine winds and barking of the seals and sea lions fill the senses of visitors and, along with

many other seaside impressions, impart the essence of the coastal environment.

Cooling fogs and salt-laden winds extend into mountainous uplands and canyons, where increased precipitation supports animals and plants adapted to these conditions, including coast redwoods at the higher elevations. When clouds and fog are absent, the sun bakes the hills, especially on the park's south-facing slopes and ridge tops covered in knobcone pine and chaparral. Visitors exploring the hills and canyons supporting these ecosystems can come away with a renewed awareness of the diversity of life.

Different inland areas of Año Nuevo SP vary considerably in character, and create different visitor experiences. The Cascade Ranch area, with historic ranch buildings on the flat coastal terrace, evokes a sense of the rural lifestyle of the past. North of Cascade Ranch, Lake Elizabeth, a constructed reservoir, is an open expanse of water surrounded by dark green vegetation that contrasts with the surrounding summer golden grass on the hillsides. The Lake Elizabeth area offers little protection from ocean winds and intense sun and visitors can hear traffic noise due to the proximity of the highway.

Farther north, unpaved Whitehouse Road extends from the highway to the park's interior. Visitors who travel this road quickly become aware of the subtle transitions and marked differences in vegetation, geology and views as they move from the coastal terrace to the upper reaches of the Santa Cruz Mountains. This experience is doubled when the route is reversed and different perceptions and views come into play during the descent back to Highway 1.

Whitehouse Road continues to areas that become more protected from the elements as taller vegetation appears along canyons. A second-growth redwood forest extends over the mountainsides on the east side of the park, where cooling fogs often envelop the trees and lend a sense of mystery to the landscape. Between stands of redwoods, visitors can see spectacular views of the parkland below and the ocean in the distance.

Año Nuevo SP represents the continuation of important legacies that directly and specifically relate to the preservation of sense of place. They were created in part to encourage and protect natural ecological processes and contain special resources that are supported and preserved for future generations. The acquisition of these parks was inspired by the beauty of the coast and the Santa Cruz

The variety of character
in different areas of Año
Nuevo SNR and SP
creates a variety of
different visitor
experiences.



Mountains environment. The parks continue to delight and inspire those who visit them.

1.5 PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The general plan provides the framework for a park unit's resource stewardship, interpretation, visitor use, operation, and development.

The general plan is the primary management document for a park within the California State Park System, establishing its purpose and a management direction for the future. By providing a defined purpose and vision with long-term goals and guidelines, it provides the framework for a unit's resource stewardship, interpretation, visitor use, operation, and development. Subsequently, this established framework helps guide daily decision-making and serves as the basis for developing more detailed management and site-specific project plans.

This general plan was developed to serve as a long range management tool that provides guidelines for fulfilling the purposes for acquisition and management of the Año Nuevo SP properties. This document does not attempt to provide detailed management or development proposals, but rather provides conceptual direction and parameters for future management and development actions. Specific objectives and strategies for implementation of the general plan are intended to be developed in subsequent planning efforts as they are needed, including the preparation of management plans and specific project plans.

This general plan document was prepared by California State Parks to satisfy the requirements the California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5002.2. The PRC specifies that a general plan will be prepared prior to development of any new facilities and shall consist of elements of discussion that will evaluate and define the proposed management of resources, land uses, facilities, concessions, operation of the unit, and any environmental impacts. The Año Nuevo SP General Plan is submitted to the State Park and Recreation Commission for consideration and final approval.

COMBINED GENERAL PLAN / EIR

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 establishes a requirement for state agencies to analyze and disclose the potential environmental effects of a proposed action. The environmental impact report (EIR), as prepared by state and local governments, is usually a stand-alone document intended to meet the requirements of CEQA. However, CEQA also encourages options to avoid needless

redundancy and duplication, such as combining general plans and EIRs (CEQA Guidelines Section 15166) and the use of tiering, a process where a lead agency prepares a series of EIRs, progressing from general concerns to more site-specific evaluations with the preparation of each new document (CEQA Guidelines Section 15152). When the lead agency combines a general plan and an EIR all CEQA requirements must be covered and the document must identify where the requirements are met. Please see **Appendix A** for a table indicating the location of required elements of the EIR within this document.

This general plan also serves as a first-tier EIR as defined in Section 15166 of the CEQA guidelines. The analysis of broad environmental matters found within the Environmental Analysis section will be a reference for future environmental documents that will provide more detailed information and analysis for site-specific developments and projects.

TIERED CEQA ANALYSIS

This General Plan/EIR serves as a first-tier EIR, as defined in Section 15166 of the CEQA Guidelines. Individual and/or site-specific projects and appropriate CEQA compliance will follow the General Plan/EIR. The analysis of broad potential environmental impacts discussed in the Environmental Analysis section of this document will provide the basis for future second-level environmental review, which will provide more detailed information and analysis for site-specific developments and projects. These projects include facility development projects and future studies. Planning and feasibility studies for park management, recreation, and resource protection are ongoing.

This document provides discussion of the probable impacts of future development and established goals, guidelines, and objectives to implementing such development in a manner which will avoid or minimize such environmental impacts. This approach is consistent with a tiered approach to EIRs.

Where a proposed project covers a wide spectrum of action, from the adoption of a general plan, which is by definition tentative and subject to further refinement, to activities with a site-specific impact, CEQA requires that "environmental impact reports shall be tiered whenever feasible[.]" (Public Resources Code Section 21093(b).) Tiering is defined as "the coverage of general matters and environmental effects in an environmental impact report prepared for a policy, plan, program, or ordinance followed by narrower or site-specific environmental impact reports...." (PRC Section 21068.5;

CEQA Guidelines Section 15385.) While a tiered EIR may not defer all consideration of impacts to a point in the future, it can legitimately indicate that more detailed studies and project-specific impacts may be considered in future environmental documents. Generally, the courts have recognized that environmental studies at the general plan level will be general. It has been found acceptable that a more detailed analysis be considered later in the process.

The level of detail addressed in the Environmental Analysis section is comparable to the level of detail provided in the land use proposals of the plan. What is critical, and what is set forth in the plan, is the formulation and eventual adoption of a set of goals and guidelines designed to minimize and mitigate impacts that might occur from the implementation of projects under the general plan.

For example, the general plan designates park property into land classifications, such as natural preserves and cultural preserves, and additional management zones. Goals and guidelines are proposed for each of these zones which provide conceptual parameters for future management actions.

1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN

Chapter 1 – Introduction to the Parks gives an overview of the characteristics of Año Nuevo SP.

Chapter 2 - Existing Conditions identifies the natural, cultural, interpretive, recreation, and aesthetic resources of the park, including a discussion of the demographic trends in California that are relevant to the planning process, as well as the systemwide and regional planning influences. This information provides the foundation to understand specific park issues.

Chapter 3 – Issues describes current challenges and planning issues facing the park.

Chapter 4 – Park Plan presents Año Nuevo SP as a single park. Purpose and vision statements describe the park's significance and future potential. Parkwide and area-specific goals and guidelines address the existing issues and provide park management and development proposals. This section also includes a description of the adaptive management process that will be used to maintain resources and positive

visitor experiences at the park. The Park Plan is considered the EIR preferred alternative.

Chapter 5 - Environmental Analysis discloses the preferred alternative's effect on the environment, including any significant and potentially significant effects that may result from implementing the general plan. Potential mitigation measures and alternatives to the proposed project are also discussed in this section. This is considered a Program EIR which will inform decision-makers and the public about the environmental consequences of the adoption of the general plan, consistent with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act and CEQA guidelines.

1.7 SUBSEQUENT PLANNING

Major programs and projects implemented during the lifespan of the general plan will require additional planning, such as management plans or specific project plans. Management plans define the specific objectives, methodologies and/or designs for accomplishing management goals as discussed in the general plan. Occurring on an as-needed basis, management plans typically focus on specific management topics, goals, or issues. Typical examples include resource management plans, trails plans, operations plans, interpretive plans, concession plans, and facility development plans.

Specific project plans are the detailed implementation plans needed to accomplish specific projects. For example, specific project plans would include design concepts, site plans, and details for rehabilitation and development of public use facilities for the Año Nuevo SP Cascade Ranch area. Future planning efforts may include the preparation of specific resource management plans to protect sensitive resources or the development of site-specific plans for new facilities.

Subsequent planning efforts also include preparing project-specific environmental compliance documents to implement management plans and proposed park development projects. These compliance documents will tier off and be consistent with the General Plan's Program EIR. The General Plan may also be amended if significant new acquisitions are added to the existing park or if other circumstances render parts of this General Plan inapplicable.

More detailed levels of planning will be required for major programs and projects implemented during the lifespan of this general plan.

1.8 THE PLANNING PROCESS

The former Año Nuevo SNR was one of nine state parks that went through a regional planning process in the late 1970s. This effort produced the San Mateo Coast Area General Plan which was approved by the California State Park and Recreation Commission in 1979. The inland portion of Año Nuevo SP is a relatively recent addition to the State Park System and does not have a prior general plan.

This updated and comprehensive planning effort was initiated to ensure a long-term and visionary general plan and is commensurate with the parks' significance within the region as well as in the State Park System. This general plan was prepared by a multi-disciplinary team from the Department's Santa Cruz District, Santa Cruz Mountains Sector, the Northern Service Center, and Planning Division in Sacramento. The team conducted field investigations, research, interviews, and surveys to compile a planning information base. This work included specific information related to the land, water, vegetation, wildlife, habitats, aesthetics, the area's prehistory and history, surrounding land uses, existing interpretation, recreation patterns and trends, and visitor use patterns and desires. This planning effort examined the area within park ownership as well as the surrounding region.

An initial public meeting was held at the Pescadero School Office on August 26, 2003 to inform the public about the park's resources and to identify public concerns and issues regarding planning for the park. Newsletters provided information about the planning process and explained or clarified major issues and planning team proposals. Planning information was also made available to the public on the Department's website. An August 2003 General Plan public meeting for Big Basin Redwoods State Park provided mapping information on Año Nuevo State Natural Reserve, Año Nuevo State Park, and Butano State Park.

The planning process was put on hold for two years due to system-wide staffing and budget challenges. When State Parks planning team members were back on the job, they gathered and analyzed extensive resource data on the parks, assessed visitor and area recreation needs, and identified park and regional issues and opportunities. From this analysis, goals, guidelines, and proposals were developed.

A subsequent public open house at the Pescadero School Office was held on December 8, 2007 to share highlights and

maps of the draft Año Nuevo SP and Butano SP general plans, provide updated planning process information, and receive public input on plan proposals. Newsletters provided information about the planning process and explained or clarified major issues and draft General Plan proposals. Planning information was also made available to the public on the Department's website.

This active participation by the public, organizations, local government, and other agencies in the development of the park's concepts, goals, and proposals influenced the direction and content of the General Plan.

THE PLANNING HIERARCHY

The following planning hierarchy provides direction for the future of Año Nuevo SP:

- **Department Mission:** The mission sets the fundamental parameters within which California State Parks acquires, plans, and manages its 278 park units.
- **Classification:** In addition to the Department's mission, park management and development is further directed by park unit classification as specified by the California Public Resources Code.
- **Declaration of Purpose:** A broad statement of direction that is unique to the park. The Declaration of Purpose required by Public Resources Code, Section 5019.50 is determined by the park's prime resources and recreation opportunities within the larger context of the State Park System.
- **Regional Planning Considerations for California State Parks Located in the Santa Cruz Mountains:** Developed in response to a regional analysis, these considerations address existing issues, regional resource management strategies, and recreation trends. Furthermore, they provide ongoing guidance to achieve the long-term vision for California State Parks located in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The regional vision provides a philosophical direction and serves as a guiding statement for the desired condition of these parks.
- **Park Vision:** The vision statement for each park is a view of the desired future conditions. It expresses what the park should ultimately be and look like as well as what kinds of visitor experiences should be available in the future.
- **Parkwide Management Goals and Guidelines:** Topical guidance whose scope is relevant for the entire park.

The Mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



These goals and guidelines were developed in response to an evaluation of existing conditions and are intended to address existing issues, foreseeable trends/patterns, and provide ongoing guidance for the incremental actions that will be taken over time to realize the long-term vision for the parks.

- **Planning Zones:** Geographic areas of a park that are characterized by specific types of resource conditions, visitor experiences, and land use concepts.
- **Specific Area Goals and Guidelines:** Management goals and guidelines that clarify the proposals for a specific area.

INTERAGENCY AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Participation by pertinent agencies and organizations was sought throughout the planning process to ensure a broad consideration of concerns and interests as well as compliance or consistency with relevant policies, regulations, and plans. Early consultation with agencies and Ohlone Tribal members on prominent issues such as endangered species, sensitive habitats, cultural resources, and recreation needs was conducted to ensure that their input would have timely consideration during the planning process. These agencies and other organizations included the California Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, California Department of Transportation, the Sempervirens Fund, the Peninsula Open Space Trust, and Save-the-Redwoods League.